

## Message Text

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13

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 IO-10 OMB-01 /076 W

----- 123700

O 121144Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 735

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC

USSAG NAKHON PHANOM

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 2507

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJ: STATUS OF GOVERNMENT FORMATION

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF : BANGKOK 2430

SUMMARY: KHUKRIT PRAMOT ANNOUNCED FEB 12 THAT HIS PARTY WOULD  
SUPPORT THE DEMOCRATS. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT IS COUNTER TO  
OTHER INDICATIONS THAT KHUKRIT HAS AGREED TO JOIN THE  
CONSERVATIVES WITH THE PROSPECT OF HIS BECOMING PRIME  
MINISTER. THE CENTRISTS AND CONSERVATIVES ARE SQUARED  
OFF FOR THE FEB 13 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY VOTE FOR PRIME  
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MINISTER. WE MAKE NO GUARANTEES, BUT EXPRESS THE ARDENT

HOPE, THAT A GOVERNMENT WILL RESULT FROM TOMORROW'S SESSION. END SUMMARY.

1. SPEAKER PRASIT KANACHANAWAT IS SCHEDULED, DURING THE FEB 13 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION, TO INVITE ONE OR MORE INDIVIDUALS TO TRY TO FORM THAILAND'S NEXT GOVERNMENT. BY SEVERAL ACCOUNTS, GENERAL KRIT SIWARA HAS INTERVENED TO EXERCISE A COMMANDING ROLE IN DESIGNATING THE NEXT PRIME MINISTER. KRIT'S REPORTED CHOICE WAS KHUKRIT PRAMOT (REFTEL).

2. THERE ARE TWO KEY QUESTIONS: WHY KHUKRIT, AND WILL KHUKRIT GO ALONG? THE FIRST IS EASY TO ANSWER. THREE OF THE FOUR UNITED THAI PEOPLE'S PARTY (UTPP) REMAKES, PLUS CLOSE ALLIES IN THE PEACEFUL PEOPLE'S AND PEOPLE'S JUSTICE PARTIES, COMMAND ONLY 103 SEATS IN THE ASSEMBLY. THE DEMOCRATS AND THE OTHER UTPP PARTY, SOCIAL AGRARIAN, HAVE 91. THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO COUNT ON THE NEW FORCE'S 12, THUS ALSO MAKING A TOTAL OF 103. BOTH GROUPS NEED THE 18 VOTES OF KHUKRIT'S SOCIAL ACTION PARTY (SAP) TO FORM A MINORITY GOVERNMENT. EITHER SIDE NEEDS 135 FOR A BARE MAJORITY GOVERNMENT. IN ADDITION TO THE NUMBER OF SEATS THAT KHUKRIT COULD BRING ALONG, HIS NAME AND REPUTATION WOULD GIVE A MUCH-NEEDED POLITICAL RESPECTABILITY TO THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP THAT MANIPULATED THE FEB 6 ELECTIONS FOR SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY (BANGKOK 2258).

3. THE SECOND QUESTION IS HARDER TO ANSWER. KHUKRIT WANTS THE PRIME MINISTERSHIP, AND HE WANTS IT BADLY. BUT KHUKRIT IS AN EXTREMELY INTELLIGENT AND PERCEPTIVE MAN WHO MUST REALIZE THAT THE CONSERVATIVES WOULD USE HIM AS A FRONT-MAN AND A SCAPEGOAT. SOME SOURCES SAY THAT KHUKRIT HAS AGREED TO THE CONSERVATIVE PROPOSAL TO BECOME PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF. THE AFTERNOON BANGKOK PRESS CONTENTS THAT KHUKRIT ANNOUNCED FEB 12 THAT HIS PARTY WOULD SUPPORT THE DEMOCRAT PARTY OF HIS OLDER BROTHER, SENI PRAMOT.

4. THE CEMENT OF THE CONSERVATIVE COALITION DERIVES PARTIALLY FROM A FEAR THAT A DEMOCRAT-DOMINATED GOVERNMENT WOULD CALL FOR EARLY ELECTIONS. ASIDE FROM THE HUGE COSTS  
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INVOLVED (BANGKOK A-43), A MEMBER OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTY TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER FEB 11 THAT HIS PARTY DID NOT WANT EARLY ELECTIONS BECAUSE 20 OF THE PARTY'S 45 PARLIAMENTARIANS WERE NEW MEN WHO MIGHT NOT SURVIVE ANOTHER ELECTION. HE ALSO STATED THAT THE SPLINTER PARTIES FEEL THAT AN ELECTION IN THE NEAR FUTURE WOULD WIPE THEM OUT.

5. A POSSIBILITY IN THE PRIME MINISTERIAL GAME FEB 13

IS THAT KHUKRIT WILL GIVE INITIAL SUPPORT TO SENI. IF SENI FAILS TO COME UP WITH A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF VOTES TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, KHUKRIT COULD THEN SWITCH TO THE CONSERVATIVES. KHUKRIT COULD ALSO VOTE FOR SENI, WHILE OTHER SAP MEMBERS WOULD CHOOSE THE CONSERVATIVES. FINALLY, KHUKRIT AND HIS PARTY COULD SUPPORT SENI ALL THE WAY, AND SPURN CONSERVATIVE OVERTURES.

6. PRASIT REPORTEDLY ANNOUNCED FEB 12 THAT TOMORROW'S VOTE WOULD BE BY OPEN BALLOT. CANDOR, IF IT INDEED PREVAILS, SHOULD BENEFIT THE DEMOCRATS. WE WOULD HOPE THAT THE INCONCLUSIVENESS OF THE LAST TWO WEEKS WILL RESOLVE ITSELF FEB 13 IN THE PROSPECT OF EARLY GOVERNMENT FORMATION. WE ARE TAKING NO BETS, HOWEVER, THAT TOMORROW'S SESSION WILL BE DEFINITIVE. KINTNER

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